



PRESS RELEASE

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**Statement by US Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Henzel
On the U.S. Bahrain FTA Second Anniversary
July 30, 2008**

Two years after the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (FTA)'s entry into force, US Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Henzel stated, "On the second anniversary of the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement we continue to see the trade relationship between Bahrain and the United States strengthen. Since the agreement went into effect two years ago, bilateral trade between our two countries has grown to historically high levels and continues to increase. I believe that Bahrainis and Americans can be proud of the agreement's positive results to date."

Mr. Henzel highlighted several areas in which the FTA has enhanced the trade relationship between Bahrain and the United States. First, since the FTA's entry into force in 2006, bilateral trade increased to an all time high of more than \$1.2 billion. Initial results from the first half of 2008 indicate a continuing growth trend again this year, with over \$540 million in bilateral trade in the first five months of the year. Second, last fall Bahrain hosted the first ever U.S.-GCC Investment Forum, which served to further promote the advantages of the FTA and spur greater trade growth. Plans are currently underway to host the second conference this October. Third, U.S. and international companies continue to expand their operations in Bahrain, taking advantage of the market access that FTA provides to companies seeking to do business in either the U.S. or Bahrain. The FTA also has great potential for increased trade in the services sector, particularly in the telecommunications and financial sectors.

Mr. Henzel added, "The FTA brings exciting possibilities to U.S.-Bahraini bilateral trade. There is no limit to the positive effect that this agreement can have on our trade relationship with Bahrain. We are just starting to see long term potential."